



A+ School Pre-Institute held at NDSU

FARGO - A team from North Carolina's A+ Program facilitated a two-day pre-institute here on August 1-2. Gerry Howell, Director of Program and Professional Development for North Carolina's A+ Schools

Network; Michelle Burrows, A+ Fellow and Education Consultant; and Kevin Warner, A+ Fellow and Dance Educator/Education Consultant introduced the A+ program by involving institute participants in discussions, question and answer sessions, arts activities, and reflective thinking. Forty-two participants attending the first A+ pre-institute, held at North Dakota State University (NDSU) in Fargo, experienced first-hand the excitement associated with learning through the arts. In addition, the NDSU Memorial Union Gallery hosted a refreshment break and art tour during the first day of the pre-institute.

A comprehensive school reform that integrates the arts throughout the curricula, A+ is based on the belief that arts are fundamental to learning and instruction.

Several North South Dakota schools and organizations were represented at the pre-institute. North Dakota representatives included Roosevelt School (Bismarck), Will-Moore School (Bismarck), Highland Acres School (Bismarck), Dorothy Moses School (Bismarck), the Lake Agassiz Arts Council, EduTech, the North Dakota Alliance for Arts Education, the NDSU Memorial Union Gallery, and the North Dakota Council on the Arts. Participants included teachers, teaching assistants, arts specialists, school secretaries, principals, parents, board members, arts organizations, and higher education staff.

The A+ pre-institute focused on the arts as central to teaching and learning, and covered topics on multiple intelligences, integrated instruction, and professional development. Participants were engaged in hands-on learning activities that included creating a team wall collage as an introduction to basic elements and principles of design and structuring an ocean habitat as a way to learn science through creative movement. The "Ocean Habitat" activity presented an example of how to integrate dance, language arts, and science. The North Dakota Council on the Arts (NDCA) website has added the lesson plan for the "Ocean Habitat," which can be downloaded from www.discovernd.com/arts.

The NDCA is currently working to bring the A+ Schools Program to North Dakota. More information about the program can be found online at www.aplus-schools.org.